1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose ; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing ; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world ; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

292 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The 535 women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick ; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened ; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull ; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

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769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *uraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *uraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some [775] sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

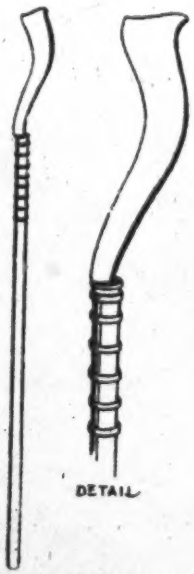

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchadar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Karikhodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukiu	Wizened
Bohbor	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sukli, Sugrin.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

774 775 dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?'
>
> I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

775 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

772 775 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

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means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

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Guddūng oda hādu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupe lekha poyāndu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hajār rupiya ta jiwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jiwā nukśān kiti ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Āde jiwa putto ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bade diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barah mator ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenk ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinwi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nikune ijor ilan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu āyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāte berāng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hēyna hago awtu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenk ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyālor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abo ise tātur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Māhun jori tāstur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tauko ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 95), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 306), Kawar (III, p. 398), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sansia (IV, p. 490) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes, nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churelin or Chunni, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

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●775 reason for this may be that just as the ghosts of virgins and the unmarried are dangerous because they have missed the most delightful, the most exciting, the most interesting thing in life and are therefore supposed to be anxious after death to revenge themselves on mankind, so also the woman who dies during the process of parturition is suddenly deprived of the chief privilege and wonder of womanhood—the joy of being a mother. Bitter and disappointed she seeks an appalling vengeance upon men.

In Bastar this fearful being is known in Halbi as Churlin or Bandrin and sometimes as Raksin or Banra-raksin. The Muria, however, know her as Ondar Muttai. This means the Old Bee Woman, implying I think that she comes upon a man with the ferocity and speed of a swarm of bees.

The Ondar Muttai is described with every circumstance of fear and horror.[1] She has only one breast, so long that it is usually slung over her shoulder. She has teeth long as the palm of your hand, an enormous head, great round eyes, a bulbous nose and ears like winnowing-fans. Her feet are red as fire, but curiously enough are not described as turned back to front as in the rest of India. She dances with her breast flung across her back and calls to men to come to her. When they hear her voice their legs tremble and fail beneath them. She lives in the forest or on the bank of a lake, and on the day the cuckoo first sings you can see her eyes across the water. In some villages, there is a belief that you are safe as long as you are in the company of buffaloes.

The Ondar Muttai appears to human beings in several different forms. Towards women and children she nearly always displays her dangerous and terrifying aspect. When a child is born and the placenta is not expelled, the ghost of the mother after death pursues young children. She catches them and carries them about, holding them against her breast. This is so terrible that the children weep and weep and cannot be consoled.

When the Ondar Muttai catches a man, sometimes she tickles him until he is so weak and exhausted that she can do her will upon him. Sometimes she says to him, 'Will you eat black *gur* or white *gur*?' If he answers, 'I'll

171 pp. 269ff., who stresses her reversed feet and her power of destroying young men. Russell and Hiralal describe Churel superstitions and precautions among the Gurao who bury a lemon under the corpse, and the Kurmi who place thorns above it. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 180f. and IV, p. 78.

The Uraon believe that the Churel destroys men by tickling them—S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), p. 96—and Dehon describes how they prevent the return of the ghost by twisting round the feet of the corpse and driving long thorns into them. They bury the body face downwards with the bones of a donkey.—P. Dehon, *The Religion and Customs of the Uraons, Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), pp. 139f. The Birhor, like the Muria, do not admit the Churel to the company of the ancestral dead and only women may bury the corpse.—S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 267ff. The Santal Churin licks the flesh from a man's bones. At burial long thorns are driven into her feet to prevent her running after her victims.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 411. The Chenchu appear almost unique in burying such women 'in the usual manner'.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), p. 154.

Frazer has collected many references to similar beliefs for the Lushai, Kachin, Shan, Palaung as well as for the Malays, the Kayan of Borneo and the Kiwai of British New Guinea among others. Similar ideas are found again among the peoples of Northern Nigeria and Rhodesia and even among the ancient Mexicans. Possibly the fears and superstitions gathering about this ghost are world-wide. See, for full references, J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 182ff.

[1] The Kharia believe that her malignant power 'is believed to be foreshadowed by the trouble she gave to her people in her last days of life, the degree of deformity and fearfulness that her features assume on death and the trouble that her corpse, by the violent contortions of its limbs on its way to the grave, gives to the pall-bearers'.—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 302.

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eat black *gur*' she fills his mouth with black stones and so kills him, then removes his brain and eats it. 115

She is said to be most powerful on the night of the anniversary of her death.

Sometimes, however, the Ondar Muttai approaches men in very different guise. In her enchanting aspect, one is tempted to describe her as the personification of the erotic dream. Thus the headman of Ulera village described how once in a dream a lovely girl came to him. Her hair beautifully combed, her neck adorned with necklaces, many combs in her head, she sat down beside him and smiled at him. 'Seeing her my mind was for her and I wondered if I could get her. Then she came and sat very close to me. She seemed to have large and lovely breasts. I caught them with my hand but there was nothing there. Then I went to her but found she had no vagina. All my power went from me and then I saw that she was a hideous ghost with one long breast across her shoulder and I awoke. All the next day I felt very ill.' This dream is typical of scores of similar experiences. 115 154

There is another very curious type of encounter with this ghost. All over Bastar (and I have found the same tradition in the Central Provinces) there is the belief that a man can capture an Ondar Muttai, 'bind' her with his charms and keep her as a wife.[1] I will give a few examples of this: 115

> In Patlabera, near Keskal, a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his *chikkāra*. A Churlin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and several children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

A similar story, this time of a Ganda called Khokoya, comes from Bakrabera; another of a Rawat or Ahir from Chingnar, another of a Marar in Kolur, yet another of a Rawat from Milkulnar. A realistic tale comes from Kumli village:

> One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he 'bound' her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the ghost is not an aboriginal but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 367ff. Enthoven, whose reports are sometimes to be received with caution, says that in Bombay there are three classes of 'Chudels'. The Poshi Chudel, a woman who has not enjoyed the pleasures of life, fondles children and renders good service to her bereaved husband. The Soshi Chudel was persecuted in life: she dries up the blood of men and revenges herself upon her family. The Toshi Chudel was a woman who loved her husband and still, as a ghost, brings him pleasure.—R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 196.

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115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 166 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[161] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

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The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished. 775 769

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference. 769

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Maghada I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Raghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connection here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

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girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

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775 primitive opinion is that the soul goes to dwell with the ancestral Dead with whom it is mingled by appropriate ceremonies. These Dead are imagined as being in close touch with their kinsfolk living still on earth and are able to influence their affairs.

But side by side with this belief is a rudimentary theory of transmigration and rebirth, and at every funeral there are special rites to ensure that the soul will be reborn in the same family and will not go elsewhere. This theory is not necessarily inconsistent with the first, though it is not easy to see how once a soul is reborn again on earth it can continue to hold the office and perform the functions of an Ancestor. But the third theory is contradictory of the others. It is borrowed from the graveyard traditions of popular Hinduism. After death the soul is pictured as turning into a dangerous malignant ghost who has to be kept away from the house at all costs and be appeased from time to time with small offerings. We thus have the ridiculous situation that at a funeral some of the rites are directed to bringing the dead man's soul back to the house and settling him there in the Pot of the Departed while others are directed at keeping him at a distance, if possible beyond the village boundary. After death, in fact, the dead man becomes both soul and ghost, and suitable but different arrangements have to be made for each of these aspects of his personality.

769 775 We have seen that in the inner room of every Maria house there is kept an earthen pot specially dedicated to the Dead; in the same room is the Hearth of the Departed. It is round this little shrine that there centres an extensive cult of the ancestral Dead. At the end of the funeral ceremonies the soul of the deceased is mingled with the other Dead through ceremonies connected with this Pot. Into it the woman of the house puts a little flour in honour of the Dead when she grinds, and here she cooks new grain at the harvest festivals. The Dead are very touchy and excitable. If the soul of a murdered man or a suicide or anyone who has died by tiger, snake, cholera, small-pox, drowning or a fall from a tree is sent to keep them company, there will be quarrels and in their annoyance they may cause great trouble to the living. They are specially sensitive to any infidelity on the part of the wife whose special duty it is to tend their shrine. They

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indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787]
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

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764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark,
769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

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775 dies a violent death. The ghost of a man killed by a tiger may possess the animal and drive it to take vengeance on other members of the community: the victim of snake-bite dwells in the snake's tail and drives it to homicidal fury.[1]

775 789 Women dying in pregnancy and childbirth become very dangerous after death and their ghosts must be laid by special ceremonies which include the driving of nails into the knees and elbows of the corpse and at the four corners of the grave, over which a herd of buffaloes may sometimes be driven.

VIII

764 In the neighbourhood of almost every Maria village will be found a row of menhirs erected in memory and for the appeasement of the Dead. Sometimes these stones are very large; sometimes they are quite small and are expected to grow bigger in course of time. The majority of clans erect an upright pillar which is called uraskal. But a number of them place instead a danyakal, a large flat stone supported on four smaller ones.

In the ceremonies attending the bringing of a menhir, the sister's son again plays a leading part. Led by him a party of three drummers and a man beating a gong and twenty or thirty men go out to the quarry where the stone has already been cut out or to some hill where a suitable rock has been observed. The sister's son touches the stone and addresses the dead man. 'In your name', he says, 'we are bringing this stone; let it be light, let not the burden be too heavy'. They place poles below and above the stone, lashing them together with rope. Then the sister's son with a drum in his hand climbs on to the stone and begins to drum with a new rhythm which goes *gul-gucha, gul-gucha, gul-gucha*. Some twenty men lift up the stone whistling loudly, *soor, soor, whee, whee*, and swing it to and fro. Then they move towards the place where the menhir is to be erected, the drummers dancing and drumming in

[1] Such accidental deaths are far from uncommon. In 1938, in the whole State 53 persons were killed by tigers, 10 by panthers, 4 by bears, 53 by drowning, 102 by snake-bite, 53 by falling from trees (chiefly the tall toddy and sago palms). The great majority of these accidents were to aboriginals and every one involved the relatives in complex and hazardous ceremonies for their protection.

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754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

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754 Witches seem to prefer the direct attack. At Mokhpal I was given a vivid description of how a witch performed her hideous rites. 'She goes out of her house at night and finds an ant-hill. She takes off all her clothes and removes even the waist-band. Seven times she goes round the hill. She appears more like a ghost than a human being. Anyone who looks at her goes blind at the sight. She goes to her victim's house, places a bit of grass on his breast and sucks his blood through it. She takes it back to the ant-hill and mixes the blood with milk. Then she can tell by looking at it whether that man will be lucky or unlucky. If the milk is red, he will die, but if it is white wealth will come to his house. If a man dies the witch goes to the grave, revives him and cuts off his head'.

At Tikanpal I was given another account. 'A witch sees a youth and desires him, but she is not content to lie with him as a lover. She must devour his whole body. She goes to him at night and turns his liver over inside his body. After he has been buried, she takes the body out of the grave. She eats the flesh and drinks the blood and puts the bones back into the grave. Sometimes when she robs a man of his blood, she puts it in a bit of broken pot and cooks it on a fire which must be made of a single piece of wood'.

Thirdly, and most sinister, a sorcerer is able to employ the services of a ghost or an evil spirit. Here the danger to the intended victim is, of course, twofold, for there is not only the malice of the magician but also the power of a supernatural
● [775] being who has become his ally. It is notable that the ghosts of executed murderers are specially liable to be so used by the magicians.

Witches also have the power of affecting the domestic life of their victims. At Samgiri the Maria described how the witch could destroy a man's seed and, even though he were not impotent, he would never be able to have a child. This happened at Kuchepal where a man was in love with a widow who was a witch. After a time he left her, and in revenge she destroyed his seed. When after a long time he found

The Kunbin stripped herself and her patient and then overwhelmed with frenzy thrust a burning log into her unfortunate victim's belly and killed her. She removed all the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen and offered them to Nagoba, claiming that in this way the hostile spirits had been destroyed.

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764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a *bhut kukri*, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

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Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London 1871), pp. 203 f.

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775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
146 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

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for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headman of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should